

STATE OF WASHINGTON
Washington State Department of Agriculture
Olympia, Washington

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

If you download this RFP from the department's website located at www.agr.wa.gov, you are responsible for sending your name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number to the RFP Coordinator in order for your organization to receive any RFP amendments or bidder questions/agency answers.

PROJECT TITLE: From the Heart of Washington Campaign

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: Monday, February 6, 2006, 12:00 noon at
Washington Department of Agriculture
1111 SE Washington St. 2nd Floor
Olympia, Washington.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: The period of performance of any contract resulting from this RFP is tentatively scheduled to begin on or about March 1, 2006 and to end on June 30, 2006. Based on the consultant's performance and additional funding, the contact may be extended. Amendments extending the period of performance or scope of the contact, if any, shall be at the sole discretion of the Department.

CONSULTANT ELIGIBILITY: This procurement is open to those consultants that satisfy the minimum qualifications stated herein and that are available for work in Washington State.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Background

The Washington State Department of Agriculture hereafter called "Department," is initiating this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit proposals from firms to promote Washington agriculture as part of the "From the Heart of Washington" (HOW) campaign. The purpose of this campaign is to raise awareness by Washington citizens of the importance of agriculture to the state and to encourage them to purchase produce and other foods grown and produced in Washington State. The Agency is seeking innovative and cost-effective initiatives to accomplish these goals.

The HOW campaign was initiated by the Department in 2001 with one-time federal funds, which have now expired. The program is currently funded by the State of Washington and is being managed by the Department. The HOW program was successful in raising awareness of Washington products among consumers and its logo is still being used by many agriculture producers.

The HOW campaign seeks to provide an umbrella of promotional activities under which agricultural groups and other partners can promote their products. In addition to the HOW program, other programs pursue similar goals and compliment its effort. These programs include the Department's Small Farm program that works with farmers to sell their crops and products directly to consumers, retailers, restaurants and institutions and several non-profit organizations, such as Puget Sound Fresh.

1.2 Objective

The objective of this RFP is to find a Consultant(s) to design and implement programs to achieve HOW's goals. This objective consists of three elements which may be bid individually or as a package based on the expertise of the applicant:

1. Public relations initiatives that increase awareness of Washington food and agriculture industry and encourages people to purchase Washington food products.
2. Proposal to manage press relations thru a series of five press releases state wide.
3. Initiatives to work with retail grocery stores throughout the state to increase the purchases of Washington grown products.

1.3 Project Description

The Department is asking qualified consultants to use their knowledge and expertise in public relations and the food industry to conceptually develop, plan and implement projects to promote the sale of Washington agriculture products locally, and to raise the awareness in Washington of the role and significance of agriculture and Washington's farmers. Funds for this project are limited, so the Department is looking for innovative projects that will generate the greatest impact – sustained consumer purchasing and awareness – for these funds.

As referenced in Section 1.2, this RFP includes three elements. A consultant may bid for an individual element, for all, or for a combination. Regardless, the three elements will be designed and implemented to, as much as possible, compliment and support each other.

The three elements are;

1. Public Relations: Design and implement a public relations campaign to achieve the goals of the overall project. This proposal should show enterprising ideas of how the public relations firm will seek out opportunities for HOW to create an umbrella with minimal dollars to enable commissions and food producers/vendors/restaurants to become involved. HOW wants to be the primary sponsor whenever possible.
2. Manage press relations thru a series of five press releases state wide: The proposal should illustrate how the team manages a press release from conception thru reporting on a state wide basis. The Agriculture staff will work with the contractor on the specific topics to be publicized.
3. Work with retail grocery stores throughout the state to increase the purchases of Washington grown products. The Contractor will work closely with local distributors and retailers to expand sales of Washington agricultural products to consumers. The Contractor will need to bring together industry leaders from the retail sector, food processing, distribution and wholesale segments.

1.4 Funding

The Department has budgeted an amount not to exceed \$70,000 for this entire project. It has also budgeted the following for the three elements of the project:

1. Public relations initiatives: \$25,000.
2. Develop and manage five press releases: \$10,000.
3. Retail grocery initiative: \$35,000.

Any contract awarded as a result of this procurement is contingent upon the availability of funding. In the event additional funding becomes available, any contract awarded may be renegotiated to provide for additional related services.

1.5 Minimum Qualifications

The Consultant(s) must be licensed to do business in the state of Washington.

For activities 1) and 2) above, the Consultant must demonstrate:

- Successful experience in placing food-related stories in the press;
- Successful experience managing food-related awareness programs that are measurable;
- Experience in conducting these activities in Puget Sound, the campaign's primary target market, as well as other markets throughout the state.

For activity 3) above, the Consultant(s) must have ten years experience in marketing in the retail grocery industry, and demonstrate:

- Experience in representing the interest of Washington State agriculture, retail, and wholesale food industry with a solid background working with food industry leaders.
- A proven track record working on major cross-sector projects with diverse stakeholders to improve marketing and distribution of agricultural products within the retail grocery industry.
- Interpersonal skills needed to work with, and develop consensus among, leaders of diverse constituent groups within the food industry.
- Provide references from leaders with the food industry who can attest to these qualifications.

1.6 RFP Coordinator

The RFP Coordinator is the sole point of contact in the Department for this procurement. All communication between the Consultant and the Department upon receipt of this RFP shall be with the RFP Coordinator, as follows:

Name	Eric F. Hurlburt
Address	PO Box 42560 2 nd Fl., Natural Resources Building 1111 Washington St. SE
City, State, Zip Code	Olympia, WA 98504-2560
Phone Number	360-902-1933
Fax Number	360-9002-2089
E-Mail Address	EHurlburt@agr.wa.gov

Any other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the Department. Consultants are to rely on written statements issued by the RFP Coordinator.

1.7 Estimated Schedule of Procurement Activities

Issue Request for Proposals	January 19
Proposals due	February 6
Evaluate proposals	February 7
Conduct oral interviews with finalists	February 14
Announce "Apparent Successful Contractor" and notify unsuccessful proposers	February 15
Negotiate contract	February 17
File contract with OFM	February 17
Begin contract work	March 3

The Department reserves the right to revise the above schedule.

2. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals may be submitted in hard copy or electronically. Proposals may not be transmitted via facsimile. The proposal must be received by the Department no later than 12:00 noon local time in Olympia, Washington, on February 6, 2006. The Department assumes no responsibility for delays caused by any delivery service or any problems in the e-mail.

If submitting the proposal in hard copy, the following information is applicable. Consultants are required to submit five (5) copies of their proposal. One (1) copy must have original signatures. The

proposal is to be sent to the RFP Coordinator at the address noted in Section 1.6 above. The envelope should be clearly marked to the attention of the RFP Coordinator, who is the agency's sole point of contact for this procurement.

If submitting the proposal electronically, the proposal must be submitted as a Microsoft Word attachment to an e-mail to Eric Hurlburt at EHurlburt@agr.wa.gov. Consultants submitting proposals via e-mail shall also send copies of the cover submittal letter and the certifications and assurances from with original signatures to the RFP Coordinator.

Late proposals will not be accepted and will be automatically disqualified from further consideration. The proposals must respond to the procurement requirements. The proposal must be complete and must stand on its own merits.

Failure to respond to any portion of the procurement document may result in rejection of the proposal as non-responsive. All proposals and any accompanying documentation become the property of the Department and will not be returned.

3. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

The four major sections of the proposal are to be submitted in the order noted below:

1. Letter of Submittal, Signed or Certified, including signed Certifications and Assurances (Exhibit A to this RFP).
2. Technical Proposal.
3. Management Proposal.
4. Cost Proposal.

3.1 Letter Of Submittal (Mandatory)

The Letter of Submittal and the attached Certifications and Assurances form (Exhibit A to this RFP) must be signed and dated by a person authorized to legally bind the Consultant to a contractual relationship. The Letter of Submittal is to include the following information about the Consultant and any proposed subcontractors:

1. Name, address, principal place of business, telephone number, and fax number/e-mail address of legal entity or individual with whom contract would be written.
2. Name, address, and telephone number of each principal officer.
3. Legal status of the Consultant (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, etc.) and the year the entity was organized to do business as the entity now substantially exists.
4. Federal Employer Tax Identification number or Social Security number and the Washington Uniform Business Identification (UBI) number issued by the state of Washington Department of Revenue.
5. Location of the facility from which the Consultant would operate.
6. Identify any State employees or former State employees employed or on the firm's governing board as of the date of the proposal. Include their position and responsibilities within the Consultant's organization.

3.2 Technical Proposal (Scored/Mandatory)

The Proposal must contain a comprehensive description of services including the following elements:

- A. Project Approach/Methodology** – Include a complete description of the Consultant's proposed approach and methodology for the project. This section should convey Consultant's understanding of the proposed project.

- B. Work Plan** – Include all project requirements and the proposed tasks, services, activities, etc. necessary to accomplish the scope of the project defined in this RFP. This section of the technical proposal must contain sufficient detail to convey to members of the evaluation team the Consultant's knowledge of the subjects and skills necessary to successfully complete the project. Include any required involvement of Department staff. The Consultant should present any creative approaches that might be appropriate and may provide any pertinent supporting documentation.
- C. Project Schedule** – Include a project schedule indicating when the elements of the work will be completed and when deliverables, if any, will be provided.
- D. Deliverables** – Fully describe deliverables to be submitted under the proposed contract.
- E. Outcomes and Performance Measurement** – Describe the impacts/outcomes the consultants propose to achieve as a result of the delivery of these services including how these outcomes would be monitored, measured and reported to the state agency.

3.3 Management Proposal

A. Project Management (Scored/Mandatory)

1. **Project Team Structure/Internal Controls** - Provide a description of the proposed project team structure and internal controls to be used during the course of the project, including any subcontractors.
2. **Staff Qualifications/Experience** – Identify staff, including subcontractors, who will be assigned to the potential contract, indicating the responsibilities and qualifications of such personnel, and include the amount of time each will be assigned to the project.

B. Experience of the Consultant (Scored/Mandatory)

1. Indicate the experience the Consultant and any subcontractors pertinent to this proposal.
2. Indicate other relevant experience that indicates the qualifications of the Consultant, and any subcontractors, for the performance of the potential contract.
3. Include a list of contracts the Consultant has had during the last five years that relate to the Consultant's ability to perform the services needed under this RFP. List contract reference numbers, contract period of performance, contact persons, telephone numbers, and fax numbers/e-mail addresses.

C. References (Scored/Mandatory)

List names, addresses, telephone numbers, and fax numbers/e-mail addresses of three business references for whom work has been accomplished and briefly describe the type of service provided. The Consultant and staff proposed to provide the services must grant permission to the Department to contact references, and others for whom services have been provided. Do not include current Department staff as references. References will be contacted and scored for the top-ranking proposal(s) only.

D. Related Information (Mandatory)

1. If the Consultant or any subcontractor contracted with the state of Washington during the past 24 months, indicate the name of the agency, the contract number and project description and/or other information available to identify the contract.

2. If the Consultant's staff or subcontractor's staff was an employee of the state of Washington during the past 24 months, or is currently a Washington State employee, identify the individual by name, the agency previously or currently employed by, job title or position held and separation date.
3. If the Consultant has had a contract terminated for default in the last five years, describe such incident. Termination for default is defined as notice to stop performance due to the Consultant's non-performance or poor performance and the issue of performance was either (a) not litigated due to inaction on the part of the Proposer, or (b) litigated and such litigation determined that the Proposer was in default.
4. Submit full details of the terms for default including the other party's name, address, and phone number. Present the Consultant's position on the matter. The Department will evaluate the facts and may, at its sole discretion, reject the proposal on the grounds of the past experience. If no such termination for default has been experienced by the Consultant in the past five years, so indicate.

3.4 Cost Proposal - Identification of Costs (Scored)

The evaluation process is designed to award this procurement not necessarily to the Consultant of least cost, but rather to the Consultant whose proposal best meets the requirements of this RFP. However, Consultants are encouraged to submit proposals that are consistent with State government efforts to conserve state resources.

Identify all costs including expenses to be charged for performing the services necessary to accomplish the objectives of the contract. The Consultant is to submit a fully detailed budget including staff costs, administrative costs, travel costs, and any other expenses necessary to accomplish the tasks and to produce the deliverables under the contract. Consultants are required to collect and pay Washington State sales tax, if applicable.

Costs for subcontractors are to be broken out separately. Please note if any subcontractors are certified by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises.

4. EVALUATION AND CONTRACT AWARD

All Mandatory Requirements Must Be Met In Order To Be Evaluated.

4.1 Evaluation Procedure

Responsive proposals will be evaluated strictly in accordance with the requirements stated in this solicitation and any addenda issued. The evaluation of proposals shall be accomplished by an evaluation team, to be designated by the Department, which will determine the ranking of the proposals.

Department, at its sole discretion, may elect to select the top-scoring firms as finalists for an oral presentation.

4.2 Clarification of Proposal

The RFP Coordinator may contact the Consultant for clarification of any portion of the Consultant's proposal.

4.3 EVALUATION WEIGHTING AND SCORING

The following weighting and points will be assigned to the proposal for evaluation purposes:

Technical Proposal	35%
Management Proposal	30%
Cost Proposal	35%

4.4 Oral Presentations May Be Required

Written submittals and oral presentations, if considered necessary, will be utilized in selecting the winning proposal. The Department, at its sole discretion, may elect to select the top scoring finalists from the written evaluation for an oral presentation and final determination of contract award. Should the Department elect to hold oral presentations, it will contact the top-scoring firm(s) to schedule a date, time and location. Commitments made by the Consultant at the oral interview, if any, will be considered binding.

4.5 Notification to Proposers

Firms whose proposals have not been selected for further negotiation or award will be notified via FAX or by e-mail.

5.0 GENERAL INFORMATION FOR CONSULTANTS

5.1 Definitions

Definitions for the purposes of this RFP include:

Department – The Department of Agriculture is the agency of the state of Washington that is issuing this RFP.

Consultant – Individual or company submitting a proposal in order to attain a contract with the Department.

Contractor – Individual or company whose proposal has been accepted by the Department and is awarded a fully executed, written contract.

Proposal – A formal offer submitted in response to this solicitation.

Request for Proposals (RFP) – Formal procurement document in which a service or need is identified but no specific method to achieve it has been chosen. The purpose of an RFP is to permit the consultant community to suggest various approaches to meet the need at a given price.

5.2 ADA

The Department complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Consultants may contact the RFP Coordinator to receive this Request for Proposals in Braille or on tape.

5.3 Proprietary Information/Public Disclosure

Materials submitted in response to this competitive procurement shall become the property of the Department.

All proposals received shall remain confidential until the contract, if any, resulting from this RFP, is signed by the Director of the Department and the apparent successful Contractor; thereafter, the proposals shall be deemed public records as defined in RCW 42.17.250 to 42.17.340, "Public Records."

5.4 Minority & Women-Owned Business Participation

In accordance with the legislative findings and policies set forth in Chapter 39.19 RCW, the state of Washington encourages participation in all of its contracts by firms certified by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE). However, no preference will be included in the evaluation of proposals. Any affirmative action requirements set forth in federal regulations or statutes included or referenced in the contract documents will apply.

5.5 Responsiveness

All proposals will be reviewed by the RFP Coordinator to determine compliance with administrative requirements and instructions specified in this RFP. The Consultant is specifically notified that failure to comply with any part of the RFP may result in rejection of the proposal as non-responsive.

The Department also reserves the right, however, at its sole discretion to waive minor administrative irregularities.

5.6 Most Favorable Terms

The Department reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposal submitted. Therefore, the proposal should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms that the Consultant can propose. There will be no best and final offer procedure. The Department does reserve the right to contact a Consultant for clarification of its proposal during the evaluation process. In addition, if the Consultant is selected as the apparent successful contractor, the Department reserves the right to enter into contract negotiations with the apparent successful contractor, which may include discussion regarding the terms of the proposal. Contract negotiations may result in incorporation of some or all of the Consultant's proposal. The Consultant should be prepared to accept this RFP for incorporation into a contract resulting from this RFP. It is also understood that the proposal will become part of the official procurement file.

5.7 Contract and General Terms & Conditions

The apparent successful contractor will be expected to enter into a contract that is substantially the same as the sample contract and its general terms and conditions available at <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/contracts/psc/Append%20E.pdf>. In no event is a Consultant to submit its own standard contract terms and conditions in response to this solicitation. The Consultant may submit exceptions as allowed in the Certifications and Assurances section, Exhibit A to this solicitation. The Department will review requested exceptions and accept or reject the same at its sole discretion.

5.8 Costs to Proposer

The Department will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Consultant in preparation of a proposal submitted in response to this RFP, in conduct of a presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFP.

5.9 No Obligation to Contract

This RFP does not obligate the state of Washington or the Department to contract for services specified herein.

5.10 Rejection of Proposals

The Department reserves the right at its sole discretion to reject any and all proposals received without penalty and not to issue a contract as a result of this RFP.

5.11 Commitment of Funds

The Director of the Department or his delegate are the only individuals who may legally commit the Department to the expenditures of funds for a contract resulting from this RFP. No cost chargeable to the proposed contract may be incurred before receipt of a fully executed contract.

5.12 Electronic Payment

The state of Washington prefers to utilize electronic payment in its transactions. The successful contractor will be provided a form to complete with the contract to authorize such payment method.

5.13 Insurance Coverage

The Contractor is to furnish the Agency with a certificate(s) of insurance executed by a duly authorized representative of each insurer, showing compliance with the insurance requirements set forth below.

The Contractor shall, at its own expense, obtain and keep in force insurance coverage that shall be maintained in full force and effect during the term of the contract. The Contractor shall furnish evidence in the form of a Certificate of Insurance that insurance shall be provided, and a copy shall be forwarded to the Agency within fifteen (15) days of the contract effective date.

Additional Insured. The state of Washington, its elected and appointed officials, agents and employees, and Washington State Department of Agriculture shall be named as an additional insured on all general liability, excess, umbrella and property insurance policies. All insurance provided in compliance with this contract shall be primary as to any other insurance or self-insurance programs afforded to or maintained by the State.

Worker's Compensation Coverage. The Contractor will at all times comply with all applicable workers' compensation, occupational disease, and occupational health and safety laws, statutes, and regulations to the full extent applicable. The State will not be held responsive in any way for claims filed by the Contractor or their employees for services performed under the terms of this contract.

5.14 Debriefing Of Unsuccessful Proposers

Upon request, a debriefing conference will be scheduled with an unsuccessful Proposer. The request for a debriefing conference must be received by the RFP Coordinator within three (3) business days after the Notification of Unsuccessful Consultant letter is faxed/e-mailed to the Consultant. The debriefing must be held within three (3) business days of the request.

Discussion will be limited to a critique of the requesting Consultant's proposal. Comparisons between proposals or evaluations of the other proposals will not be allowed. Debriefing conferences may be conducted in person or on the telephone and will be scheduled for a maximum of one hour.

5.15 Protest Procedure

This procedure is available to Consultants who submitted a response to this solicitation document and who have participated in a debriefing conference. Upon completing the debriefing conference, the Consultant is allowed three (3) business days to file a protest of the acquisition with the RFP Coordinator. Protests may be submitted by facsimile, but should be followed by the original document.

Consultants protesting this procurement shall follow the procedures described below. Protests that do not follow these procedures shall not be considered. This protest procedure constitutes the sole administrative remedy available to Consultants under this procurement.

All protests must be in writing and signed by the protesting party or an authorized Agent. The protest must state the grounds for the protest with specific facts and complete statements of the action(s) being protested. A description of the relief or corrective action being requested should also be included. All protests shall be addressed to the RFP Coordinator.

Only protests stipulating an issue of fact concerning the following subjects shall be considered:

- A matter of bias, discrimination or conflict of interest on the part of the evaluator.
- Errors in computing the score.
- Non-compliance with procedures described in the procurement document or Department policy.

Protests not based on procedural matters will not be considered. Protests will be rejected as without merit if they address issues such as: 1) an evaluator's professional judgment on the quality of a proposal, or 2) Department's assessment of its own and/or other agencies needs or requirements.

Upon receipt of a protest, a protest review will be held by the Department. The Department director or an employee delegated by the Director who was not involved in the procurement will consider the

record and all available facts and issue a decision within five business days of receipt of the protest. If additional time is required, the protesting party will be notified of the delay.

In the event a protest may affect the interest of another Consultant that submitted a proposal, such Consultant will be given an opportunity to submit its views and any relevant information on the protest to the RFP Coordinator.

The final determination of the protest shall:

- Find the protest lacking in merit and uphold the Department's action; or
- Find only technical or harmless errors in the Department's acquisition process and determine the Department to be in substantial compliance and reject the protest; or
- Find merit in the protest and provide the Department options which may include:
 - Correct the errors and re-evaluate all proposals, and/or
 - Reissue the solicitation document and begin a new process, or
 - Make other findings and determine other courses of action as appropriate.

If the Department determines that the protest is without merit, the Department will enter into a contract with the apparently successful contractor. If the protest is determined to have merit, one of the alternatives noted in the preceding paragraph will be taken.

6. RFP Exhibits

Certifications and Assurances - Attached

Personal Service Contract Format including General Terms and Conditions (GT&Cs): see OFM.s Website at <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/contracts/psc/Append%20E.pdf>.

EXHIBIT A

CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

I/we make the following certifications and assurances as a required element of the proposal to which it is attached, understanding that the truthfulness of the facts affirmed here and the continuing compliance with these requirements are conditions precedent to the award or continuation of the related contract(s):

1. I/we declare that all answers and statements made in the proposal are true and correct.
2. The prices and/or cost data have been determined independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement with others for the purpose of restricting competition. However, I/we may freely join with other persons or organizations for the purpose of presenting a single proposal.
3. The attached proposal is a firm offer for a period of 60 days following receipt, and it may be accepted by the Department without further negotiation (except where obviously required by lack of certainty in key terms) at any time within the 60-day period.
4. In preparing this proposal, I/we have not been assisted by any current or former employee of the state of Washington whose duties relate (or did relate) to this proposal or prospective contract, and who was assisting in other than his or her official, public capacity. (Any exceptions to these assurances are described in full detail on a separate page and attached to this document.)
5. I/we understand that the Department will not reimburse me/us for any costs incurred in the preparation of this proposal. All proposals become the property of the Department, and I/we claim no proprietary right to the ideas, writings, items, or samples, unless so stated in this proposal.
6. Unless otherwise required by law, the prices and/or cost data which have been submitted have not been knowingly disclosed by the Proposer and will not knowingly be disclosed by him/her prior to opening, directly or indirectly to any other Proposer or to any competitor.
7. I/we agree that submission of the attached proposal constitutes acceptance of the solicitation contents and the attached sample contract and general terms and conditions. If there are any exceptions to these terms, I/we have described those exceptions in detail on a page attached to this document.
8. No attempt has been made or will be made by the Proposer to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition.
9. I/we grant the Department the right to contact references and others, who may have pertinent information regarding the Proposer's prior experience and ability to perform the services contemplated in this procurement.

Note: If submitted electronically, include the following:

On behalf of the firm submitting this proposal, my name below attests to the accuracy of the above statements.

Signature of Proposer

Title

Date